

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT O 00860 171344Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
PA-01 USIA-06 SP-02 /034 W
-----025572 180804Z /11

R 171310Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2172
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT OF SPAIN 0860

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, TD
SUBJECT: MORE CONFUSION IN THE PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION.

REFERENCE: PORT OF SPAIN 747

1. SEVERAL EVENTS HAVE OCCURRED IN THE PAST FEW DAYS
SUGGESTING FURTHER FRAGMENTATION AND REALIGNMENTS IN
THE ALREADY FEEBLE TRINIDADIAN PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION.

A. OVER THE WEEKEND THE SPLIT BETWEEN THE TWO
DEMOCRATIC ACTION CONGRESS (DAC) MPS, A. N. R.
ROBINSON AND WINSTON MURRAY, SURFACED OPENLY FOR THE
FIRST TIME WHEN MURRAY HELD A REGIONAL PARTY CON-
GRESS WHICH WAS DECLARED BY ROBINSON TO BE "UNCONSTITU-
TIONAL." MURRAY'S CONGRESS EVIDENTLY CENSURED ROBINSON
FOR HIS HANDLING OF THE TOBAGO INTERNAL SELD-GOVERN-
MENT ISSUE IN PARLIAMENT, AND ALLEGEDLY URGED A REDUC-
TION IN HIS POWERS AS PARTY CHAIRMAN.

B. EXPRESS OF MARCH 16 REPORTS MURRAY AS ACCUSING
ROBINSON OF TRYING TO CUT THE GROUND FROM UNDER HIS
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FEET WHILE CLAIMING, DISINGENUOUSLY, THAT "THERE IS NO
SPLIT IN THE DAC." MURRAY IN THE PAST HAS TOLD LABOFF
THAT "I AM THE DAC ON TOBAGO--WITHOUT ME ROBINSON IS
NOTHING."

C. TRINIDAD GUARDIAN OF MARCH 16 REPORTS THAT AT A
WEEKEND MEETING OF RAFFIQUE SHAH'S UNITED LABOR FRONT

(ULF) FACTION, SOME ACTIVISTS URGED SHAH TO STEP DOWN AS LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN FAVOR OF THE DAC'S ROBINSON. THE PROPOSAL, WHICH CLEARLY WAS AIMED AT BLOCKING AN EXPECTED BID BY BASDEO PANDAY FOR THE POST AND PRESERVING AT LEAST SOME POLITICAL INFLUENCE FOR SHAH'S ULF FACTION IN THE SHIFTING OPPOSITION POWER BALANCE, WAS REJECTED BY SHAH.

D. PANDAY UNQUESTIONABLY IS PREPARING TO RESUME HIS FORMER POSITION AS LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (AND TO REPLACE THE ULF-APPOINTED SENATORS WHO HAVE SIDED WITH SHAH). ALTHOUGH HE IS NOT OPENLY FORCING THE LEADERSHIP ISSUE, HE CLEARLY BELIEVES THAT TIME IS ON HIS SIDE.

2. COMMENT: THE IN-FIGHTING IN THE OPPOSITION SEEMS TO BE PEAKING JUST AT A TIME WHEN THE WILLIAMS REGIME MIGHT BE SOMEWHAT MORE VULNERABLE THAN USUAL BECAUSE OF THE BWIA STRIKE, LOOMING TROUBLE WITH THE SUGAR WORKERS, AND SEVERAL OTHER LESS VOLATILE ISSUES. BUT AS THINGS NOW STAND, THE ULF'S ABILITY TO CAPITALIZE ON THESE OPPORTUNITIES IS NIL.
FOX

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: OPPOSITION PARTIES, DISSIDENT FACTIONS, PARTY SCHISMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PORTO00860
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780120-0696
Format: TEL
From: PORT OF SPAIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780354/aaaabtrs.tel
Line Count: 85
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b68817c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 47 PORT OF SPAIN 747
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3290383
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MORE CONFUSION IN THE PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION.
TAGS: PINT, TD
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b68817c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014